



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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3.7 Million people not in the labour force

There were 3.7 million people aged 15 to 69 years who were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed) in September 1999, according to the results of an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey released today. This was a 2 per cent increase from September 1998.

Persons not in the labour force make up 28 per cent of Australia's civilian population aged 15-69 years. Females accounted for two-thirds of persons not in the labour force, a proportion that has not changed in recent years.

The number of people with marginal attachment to the labour force decreased by 4 per cent since September 1998, the first decrease since September 1994.

People were defined as marginally attached to the labour force if they were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks (818,000 people in September 1999), or they were actively looking for work but were unavailable to start in the survey reference week (65,200). Other findings on the 883,200 persons with marginal attachment include:

- Two-thirds of the 616,200 females would have preferred part-time work.
- For males the most common reasons for not actively looking for work were 'attending an educational institution' (27 per cent) and 'own ill health or disability' (18 per cent).
- The most common reasons for not actively looking for work for females were 'childcare' (30 per cent) and 'attending an educational institution' (13 per cent).

There were an estimated 105,800 discouraged jobseekers in September 1999, a decrease of 5 per cent since September 1998. Discouraged jobseekers are a component of persons with marginal attachment to the labour force. These are people who wanted to work but were not actively looking for work mainly because they believe that employers consider them too young or too old (42 per cent), or that there are no jobs in their locality or line of work (24 per cent).

Persons without marginal attachment to the labour force made up 76 per cent of the 3.7 million persons not in the labour force (an increase of 4 per cent from September 1998). Some 89 per cent of this group did not want to work or were permanently unable to work, a proportion which has remained stable over the last five years. The remaining 309,800 people wanted to work but were neither actively looking nor available to start within four weeks.

Copies of the publication **Persons not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 1999** (Cat. No. 6220.0) are available from ABS Bookshops. The main features of the publication are available on this site. If you wish to purchase a copy of this publication, contact the ABS Bookshop in your capital city. summary of the publication may be found on this site.

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